

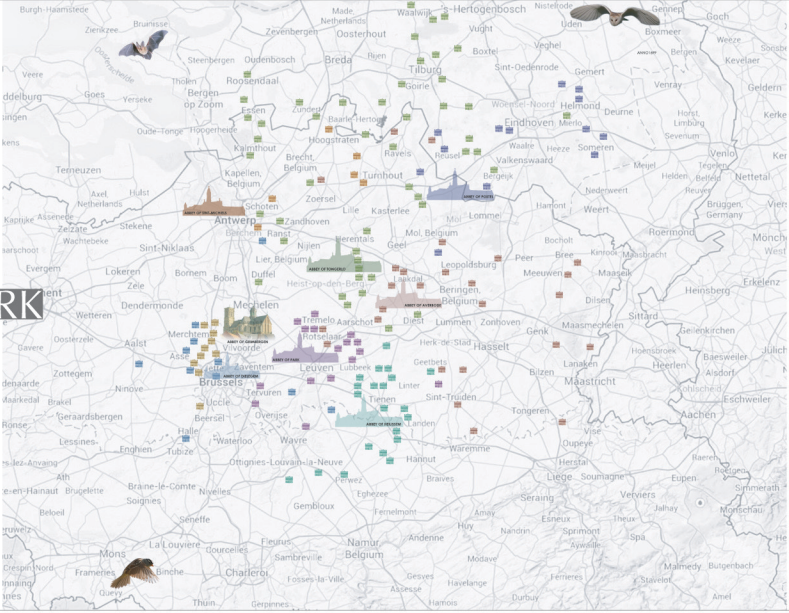
# DEFINING METHODS to TRACE the SOCIAL, CULTURAL and ECOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE of LOCAL BUILT HERITAGE

Cartes Parlantes

**Methods:**  
Instead of concentrating on the local built monuments as on a solid and permanent object of architecture we could experience it as a fundamentally socially entangled fabric. The act of wandering is a way to explore this. Can a reinterpretation of the **Cartes Parlantes** be a valuable method to detect, unveil and map hidden social, cultural and ecological values?

## NETWORK

**Cartes Parlantes:** term coined by the modern historian François de Dainville referring to the Middle Ages where maps were judged according to the faithfulness with which they described **relationships** between people and their physical environment.



Local rural built heritage enables Resilient Environments, as it is an integrated part of a social, cultural and ecological **meshwork**. From this point of view it becomes interesting to transcend the approach of concentrating on the building alone and to develop methods beyond this narrow focus on the object, to relate it towards a bigger framework of cultural and spatial experiences, urban and landscape structures.

Monumental built heritage is very often strategically situated on a **network** of old roads shaped by former times, nearby important existing crossroads or rivers to provide easy accessibility and close connection to them.

Local modest heritage on the contrary is thoroughly entangled with pathways and trails as part of subtle social, cultural and ecological **meshwork**. It attributes the human scale to the landscape. Its territory is often not clearly defined by a materialised boundary. And even if some times physical walls or hedges surround it, it still has no mental barrier around. It seems like no one owns it but that all have use of it. It is a space of collective independence people use for satisfying their social needs. It became collective by its use, local significance or representation. This makes it a place of attachment and recognition.

## MESHWORK

**Old roads, paths and trails - Line 1 - Brussegem-Grimbergen**  
28th of September 2014  
Assembling of extracts out of the 'Caertenboek van Grimbergen 1699', maps registering the properties of the abbey of Grimbergen (Norbertin order). Indication of the old road in the fragile meshwork of paths and trails, villages with constructions (today protected heritage) of the Norbertin order.



## Ecology of life - study of lines

Reference to Tim Ingold in *Up, Across and Along*. The environment of rural built heritage is rather a zone in which the pathways and trails of natives and newcomers both human (immigrants, visitors) and non-human (nature) reclaims these sites creating habitats that are exceptional for biodiversity. They were and still are places to pause and to reflect, beacons, points of reference or meeting points along the paths that people take on their everyday walks around their homes and to their jobs. These places might not be destinations or sites of special interest to be made the occasion of a separate visit but they belong to the **well-known trusted things**. They attribute the **human scale** to the landscape and include all living things.

## ZONE



The ecological aspects of these buildings and their material assures the minimal environmental hereditary effect on the next generation; the cultural significance in the local environment on the other hand gives them a more authentic character and connects the buildings with the social fabric over different generations. Local built heritage can very well adapt itself to a changing society; even give a dynamic force to small communities.

A particular case is that of the parsonages built by the Norbertine order. They were once all part of a historical social, religious and political network. The abbey spread their influence all over the countryside by integrating them into the existing fabric, restructuring our villages and controlling them. Although today most of these buildings lost their original function and connection to the abbey, they are often entangled in complex spaces of experience of individual and collective memory.

**References:**  
Kaart van feraris (Kabinetskaart van de Oostenrijkse Nederlanden en het Prinsbisdom Luik) 1777, Folio 73 - Vilvoorde - Vilvoorde  
Kaart van Brussegem - www.geopunt.be/kaart - kaarten > kaarten en plannen > Basiskaart, luchtfoto en adres > Basiskaart - basiskaart - GIB: volledige kaart (onderwerp)  
Kaart van Brussegem - www.geopunt.be/kaart - kaarten > kaarten en plannen > Basiskaart, luchtfoto en adres > Basiskaart - basiskaart - GIB: volledige kaart (onderwerp)

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